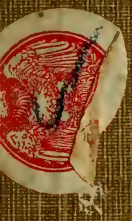

MEANS

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To the Spirit's Incarnation,

MOTHER.

"Faith is the life of God in the soul."—*Luther.*

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FOREWORDS.

An Austrian princess visited her uncle, the Duke of Lucca, one summer, when the land was filled with flowers and every tree bright with foliage and wreathed with the tendrils of the vine. She had never been in Italy before, and the wonderful beauty seemed to her like a dream of paradise. She fancied that the lovely landscape was thus decorated for her sake and thanked her uncle for his wonderful welcome. But a poet standing by the side of the princess told her that the giver of the festival was the King of kings, and that He had made the land one bower of bloom not more for her than for the poorest peasant girl. If the superficial observer be compared to the princess, there may well, to the poet, be likened the author of "Means," who, in his neat little volume, teaches that God adorns the world for every one who is capable of seeing and enjoying its beauty. After illustrating how God operates through means, the author, by using objects of nature as symbols of spiritual truth, makes the outward world to us the image of a heavenly realm. He sees divinity in woods and hills, and receives the flower as a celestial message. He leads to the conclusion that the unseen things of God are interpreted by the seen; that every object of the

natural creation when rightly regarded, is an avenue by which we can draw near to the Ruler of all; and that the whole earth is aflame with the presence of God. The book, exhibiting metaphorical language, and consisting of essays on "Means in General," "Flowers," "Light," "Music," and "Ideals," is fraught with thoughts of an uplifting tendency, and will interest and strengthen anyone who gives it proper perusal.

THE AUTHOR.

MEANS.

CHAPTER I.

MEANS IN GENERAL.

God always operates through means. He used Christ. Christ used clay. God and Christ use Paraclete. These facts reveal to me the reason why people make failures of life. Every young man and woman desires to be prosperous; but if that desire is not accomplished by a means of gratification, the desire is not economic.

We all want to have means sufficient at least to make this life comfortable for ourselves as well as for those about us; and yet this desire stops with desire and prayer, which, without means, are as good as nothing, so far as the result is forthcoming.

We often wonder why God does not send the blessing. Is it possible for even God to tie something to that which does not exist? Change your prayer. Before you can receive Christ's benediction on Mary, you must be in Mary's place. Ask

God to aid you through an avenue, and then set out to accomplish something. There is but one benefit that a college student has in the market of the world over his non-university friend, and it rests in this: that he sees means with which to reach ends, and has power to utilize his untried strength. Every man has latent power as certainly as he has existence. It is the blacksmith who has the developed muscles, not because he desires them, but because he discerns, willingly or unwillingly, an honest means through which physical laws pertaining to himself can operate. Activity envelopes structure, and the very result may become a new means. Do not sit in vacant emptiness and plan, but rather have something tangible upon which God can lay his hand and thus assist you. Poverty is no excuse; neither is lack of education, nor the problem of environments, if we make a proper use of the means accorded us. We are the framers of our own constitutions, physical, moral and intellectual.

Abraham Lincoln was poor and untutored, but he knew it. He was encompassed by the waters of bitter circumstances, bearing ships heavy with many burdens. These did not make him, but he used them to make himself the greatest, grandest and best man America ever produced. He was the first American. He was his own instructor. The little knowledge which he, from time to time, secured was used by him, and, as a result, God was enabled to form a partnership with him. Some will say that this man came into the world blessed with superior parentage. It is true that

his father and mother were godly and intellectual. Here I will grant that evolution does operate. We must admit that one generation is affected as much, yea, even more, by the seed of good than by that of sin. Yet I cannot see why He should neglect us, if the God of our fathers is just as truly our God. We must remember that all men were not born for the same purpose. Every sphere and walk of life must have its constellation of men, and every constellation will have its star of first magnitude. Some one says: "A great man is simply the greatest of his kind." Thus it was in the sixteenth century. Luther was the star. Was there ever a man born under circumstances more adverse to greatness than he? Yet in the same breath I ask—Was there ever a man, except Moses and Paul, who rose to such dizzy heights in the eyes of both God and man? He laid hold of justification by faith and it became his means. But, truer still, he did not simply know the means, but, in the use thereof, he bent every muscle and every nerve; and, if I dare so speak, every mental fibre was drawn in his efforts until it was placed in a sensitive attitude for the musician's fingers.

You may have an ideal which, by the way, is only a seen, yet unseen, a known, yet unknown, possibility; one for which men are willing to sacrifice body, mind, and soul. If you have such an ideal set about to realize it. God will bless you, for then he will have something for which to bless you; men will praise you because there will be a connection between you and your fellows. Our

relations with God are not vastly different from those with our brother. I never receive praise unless I form an avenue through which the compliment of men can travel to me. Likewise, I never receive grace from God unless I strew some path with the palms of mortal endeavor, and thereby enable Him to have a triumphant march into the new heart, new mind, and new man; yea, even into the New Jerusalem of my soul.

I have enclosed in a pot all the nourishment necessary for a plant, but, if the plant is kept in another pot, of what value is the soil? We must bring the two together. Some may ask: "Is it absolutely necessary for an infinite Christ to demand means? It is inconceivable, although our lack of perception does not render it improbable for Christ to operate without means. If there are limitations they have been placed by God. It is not my fault that Adam sinned; but it is a fault of mine if I am starving and will not accept offered food. The discord often lies in this: We despise the station in which our native talents have placed us, and we are rather unwilling to start from nature's post on our ascending march. It is possible for this to be remedied. By laying one stone upon another, we get a beautiful monument of kingly splendor, whereas the poor stones, as they lie in the quarry in which nature placed them, are unpolished and unadmired. Again you say: "In this case a mind operated." So, in the stone of thought with which we are to build, a mind operated. Simply let it continue to act, but let us press one step more: Did the stones show any

means to the mind? Here again the answer is in the affirmative. In the stones lay the proper stuff. Countless millions of minds have contributed to the splendor of your mind, and you know it not, so nicely and scientifically has the work been done. Become responsive. If you have not the means to secure the means with which to become the means, then I say: tap your left arm, draw from it, if you be an artist, blood; paint your passion and this will be the means by means of which God will, because he can, abundantly bless you.

CHAPTER II.

FLOWERS.

FLOWERS are constant reminders of God's love. Like Him, they have no respect of persons, but speak to all alike in the voice of perfume. He who has lost the sense of smell is bereft of one of the most charming means of communicating with God through Nature. Where may one journey and not find flowers of some description? How often do we thoughtlessly trample beneath our feet these unpretentious messengers! Did it ever occur to you that, by crushing a single weed, perhaps you had blotted out of existence a flower and a means which never before existed! A flower in that fertilization might here have produced a seed of new beauty for flower bearing, and a means whereby that especial flower to be would have been of such a hue as to have attracted the eye and nostril of the most hardened sinner who might have passed that way.

We are strange and thoughtless creatures, thus to destroy God's handiwork without the least feeling or concern.

Then, too, the very flower of anticipation might have been the means of converting the soul of the very one who crushed it. Every plant's ambition,

in so far as it is ambitious, is to present to the world its soul, for the flower is the soul of the plant. How beautiful must some of our souls be! Cultivation of the plant body enables that body to produce a finer, purer, more perfect soul, than if the body had been neglected. How long it seems to take for some plants to exhibit their souls, while again others repeat the miracle many times, just in order to persuade us. Yet, even among the flora of the world we can find our Judas and his associates in living unpretentious lives. The humming bird will not dip for nectar into the cup held by the fair white or pink face and hands of the oleander. This lightning messenger knows too well that the money cup is not pure, but contains alloy. We are pleased to cultivate some plants for their physical beauty alone, their grace and symmetry seem to delight us, and we sacrifice the soul in this case for the body. Through the growth of His plants we have a suggestion of God's desire to perfect the soul at the expense of the material portion.

There is a golden mean to be worked out among men which is seen in the "Lily of the Valley" which was plucked for you and for me on Calvary. For two years the writer has been nourishing a seedling, thinking that perhaps time would tell us something of its meaning. We cannot, by any known means, determine the color of the flower until that flower reveals itself. "We are known by our fruits" is literally true. The conditions favorable to the perfecting of one plant-body and soul will not bring perfection to another. The

palm, the fern and the delicate moss do not enjoy the strong drinks of light so relished by the sunflower; neither do vines, as the wisteria and trumpet-vine, ask for the privilege of decorating the same part of the home as does the mountain fringe. In this we can find a parallel to the development of different individuals, morally, spiritually, and intellectually. Some men need to be supported, as do the climbers; while others flourish in the strength they derive from the ordinary sources around and about them. We need not all be carried on flowery beds of ease, as ferns and mosses, for we can be, if no more, the moss-covered rocks for the weary travelers. Purpose crowns every work from the Master's hand. We are not wont to believe this, as we travel over this land and notice the hundreds of weeds that seem to live as tramps and paupers; but, when we consider that even all such life came by the direct laws of God, we dare not condemn.

Let the young man or woman who to-day complains that the world is crowded, that the professions are full, and the like, remember that not every disease has found its conqueror; and that in some of the lovely weeds may lurk the medicinal properties for the healing of those particular ailments. Whose right is it to discern it? Who could aid humanity better than such an one? Upon this there is no monopoly.

Then while there is freedom let us use it, lest it slip away and we know it not. One way of detecting the medicinal properties is to notice at what flowers the humming bird stops for nectar: the

ones passed by will generally be of such a character. Nature is continually making feasts for the insects and birds of the world. At these feasts, as at those made by man, we can detect the cultured as well as the unrefined of society. Decorations are perfect; every space is filled with something for the feast of love.

The skies add the canopy, the large, mirror-like lakes and rivers reflect it and endeavor to make two scenes out of one. The gentle zephyrs serve as messengers, because Nature does not send out invitations; she only creates, and, if in that which she creates directly there is not the component or complement part to Nature's creation, then she deems such a one as unworthy of being her guest. Her menu, however, is not engraven in black and white, but is colored with all the tints of the rainbow, while the listed viands are made known by wafts of perfume. Nature does not withhold her delights for any special season or place. She has so adapted her every plan to the welfare and concern of her heavenly children that, go where we will, we can find some of her creation.

This earth is one vast flower garden, and in it are those plants, such as the cacti, capable of enduring the blistering rays of the sun. Look again in the more shaded nooks, governed by trickling waters and diffused light. You will find the delicate creations as of some fairy's hand. Look again into the cave, where darkness is the one-eyed giant, and you will find the lens plant, capable of converging for its own use the few rays of light that unfortunately enter there. Should we be cast into

a watery grave our casket of ripples and pearly shells would be covered with the most gorgeous of Nature's creations—the seaweeds of every hue and tint. Again, let some eagle carry us off and leave us to die on the snow-capped Alps, and we will not be without our flowers; for even there beneath the snow we could find the little feather-covered flower of the Alps. Ah! we may even be sailing in an airship, until finally we are brought where gravity is neutralized between two opposing forces, and we are left suspended. In this condition could we not spend the remainder of our time looking for orchids that might be attached to our ship —air plants? Ah! God has not left us comfortless. We have the beauties of creation everywhere around us. Let us see to it that we use them in the way that will best fit us for the heaven above, which will be like one mighty flower, of which we will be the petals. Would it not be awful to find on that day of awarding prizes that the petal which your life was to form would be missing? Let us make heaven grand. It lies with us. We can be petals of such extreme whiteness and perfection in Christ that He will consider us worthy of our own high calling. Have you ever wondered at the meaning of the flower? Look at its extreme beauty. Christ took delight in drawing his hearers' eyes and minds to the lilies of the field, and was pleased to say that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. What wonderful artists the birds and insects are! They dip for food, but even in so doing, they deposit a grain of pollen that will perchance be the means of fertilizing a

seed that will, in time, produce a plant, the flower of which will be the first of its kind. Man caught the idea of cross fertilization from the birds and insects. Most seeds are fertilized in this way. This is one of the most vital of Nature's laws. After one has seen the florist walking along the walks of his conservatories with a magnifying glass, taking the pollen from this plant and depositing it on the pistil of another, we can imagine something of the infiniteness of God.

Of late years some of the leading magazines of the country have been publishing pictures of homes surrounded by flowers and flower gardens. The originator of the idea should be praised and adored by every lover of God. This very thought will be the means of teaching others to beautify their homes in a similar manner, and this again will be the means of converting the houses in which the Ego lives into a more beautiful mansion. Life is not real until we love Nature and her operations, and have, at our very feet, many of her choicest gems. A brown stone front that costs thousands, and defies storm and tide, if it be unadorned by the graces of Nature, is not half so rich and beautiful as the old gate covered with its hop vine which directs the weary traveler to a pump that once had coursing in its cells living sap —but now living waters from the deep. If, then, the God of Nature is our God, surely we have the right to feel proud.

Nature seems to delight in surrounding us with flowers. She not only places them beneath our feet for a carpet, but she arranges them in length,

from one inch, by successive steps, until they not only kiss our very lips, but also from the trees above hang in festoons, as if beckoning us to look skyward. Have you ever unwrapped the meaning involved in the folds of a morning-glory bud? Notice how nicely and mathematically they are rolled. Open one twelve hours before time for it to expand—and in its expansion present to the world the attitude of one exhorting—and you will be surprised at the difficulty you will experience. Thus it is with the bud of our lives—if we undertake to open it by any other means than the laws set in operation by God, we will have nothing but torn petals and a debauched specimen of trifled ignorance. Let us wait patiently and in due time we shall reap, if we faint not. When do flowers not add charm? Who cannot see in their development a parallel to our own? Let us take the life of Dante and read it in the language of flowers.

When a seed is sown no one knows the exact color of the flower that is to spring from it.

The early history of every plant's existence is wearisome. If we should watch the clock-work development we would find nothing of special interest. Our faith incites us to feed, water, prune and care for the little seedling, believing that "Future" will have revealed to her a bright star —a star of first magnitude.

There is an old saying, "April showers bring forth May flowers." The condition of Italy must account for in part the plant that was born about the middle of May, 1265. At that time there

sprang from Italian soil a plant whose wondrous life and influence was a secret.

This human plant sprang from seed that was not expected to produce anything of special benefit to mankind, either as a healing power, or as a solace for man in his sad hour. Although this plant sprang from a long-lived race, yet that which this whole genius produced was nothing as compared to its present side shoot. It is believed by many superstitious people of the present day that seed sown during this time of the year, or during this phase of the moon, or this hour of the day, will bring forth more and better plants than otherwise. It seems, from what history tells us, that this superstitious idea is not of modern creation, but that its life history extends far back into the mysterious ages. The strange-thinking, stranger-believing people of the Middle Ages not only applied this doctrine to the plant kingdom, but even extended it to the human family. Thus we find that the human plant born during the middle of May, 1265, was under the sign of the twins, the glorious stars pregnant with virtue, and to which he owes his genius.

Astrologers considered this constellation as favorable to literature and science, and Buenitto Latini, his instructor, tells him in the "Inferno" that if he follows its guidance he cannot fail to reach the harbor of fame. We know very little of Dante's boyhood. We know very little of this plant's early development. After awhile, however, this plant, as all plants that anticipate expanding and giving to the world the glorious possibilities

within, forced its roots far down into the rocky and difficult beds of philosophy, theology, astrology, arithmetic, and geometry. Reading history, basking in the sunlight of many curious books, and watching and sweating in his studies, he acquired the science which was to adorn and explain his verse. He obtained a firm footing, like that of the sturdy oak, so that when the howling storms of this tempestuous life came upon him he was rooted and grounded in a firm foundation, and might well stand and laugh at the poor, miserable plants with roots upon the surface. He brought forth fruit.

In order that any plant may thrive, no matter how strong at first, it must have careful attendance. Either the attendant must be a careful human or a more careful Nature. Well, this plant which we will call Dante—for every man who thinks he knows anything about science, and especially higher botany, knows that very early in life he must begin to tack on names—this plant, Dante, had careful, earnest teachers. If the plant was inclined to twine, they supported it; if inclined to root deeply, they saturated with drops of wisdom the soil. Music was one of the early characteristics of this plant. I do not know whether I can find a resemblance here to some other plant, or not, but if botanical plants do not exhibit any love for music, they enrich it by their presence. Dante never wrote sweeter or more melodious lines than those in which he expresses the wish that he might "be wafted by enchantments over the sea, wheresoever they might list."

Flowers.

We have now arrived at the period of transplanting. Every successful plant grower always transplants his seedlings several times. The very young slip or seedling grows in sand. Dante thus first grew in studies of early youth, but now he is given the more sturdy soil. He is beginning to be buffeted. Take two young plants equally strong and equally well developed, and place them under different conditions, under different circumstances, different environments, and note the results. One grows stronger, the other weaker.

Dante, like Milton, was trained by the strictest academical education, yet Dante lived under a warmer sun and brighter sky than Milton; and found in the rich variety and gayety of his early life a defence against the withering misfortune of his later years. We cannot predict just what will take place in regard to a plant. The sturdiness thereof is not determined by its height under a clear sky, but only when the howling tempests of politics, if you please, assail it. Our plant, after his transplanting, grows rapidly. Every plant has assimilative organs. So in this one, Dante, we find not only assimilative processes at work, but a concentration of the spirit of the Middle Ages. He is, in his very concentrating, preparing to expand and send forth into the world that for which almost every plant is raised; namely, its flowers, then its fruit.

The true and lasting fruit of mankind is the fruit of the head. A plant not only impoverishes the soil upon which it grows, but it will, if left, again fertilize it. So Dante fertilized the Italian

linguistic soil. He made it richer and better, and therefore more able to bring forth well developed plants.

As we look at certain flowers and drink in their meaning, we are charmed. Our æsthetic natures are elevated, our standard of joy is raised. A home may be unknown, but when it contains some marvel, either in the plant or man family, it becomes immortalized. "Dante, like Virgil, could immortalize, by a simple expression, a person, a place, or a phase of Nature." This power, a gift from God, cannot be acquired.

There is, however, a more striking similarity—to paint word pictures between Dante and Milton. The flower upon this plant is now being revealed. The bud was beautiful; no doubt the expanding flower will be superb. Behold, it opens, it dazzles the eye, and, I dare add, it continues for many, many years to blind the people so that they do not see its beauty until it begins to wane. They only realized its extreme significance when they beheld the fruit. Dante's "Inferno" could not have been the fruit of a plant whose roots were fibrous. It took a plant with mighty fabric to breathe into existence such fruit. Recall to your mind its vivid color-descriptions and its symmetry. Think of the strain upon the fiber of the plant. Imagine the fertilizing power. Conceive of his imaginative power. Yet, Dante's was not without foundation, and it is an easy matter to see where he obtained much of his material. It is a biological fact that more plants or rather more flowers are fertilized by cross than by self fertilization.

So we can pick out certain colors, verses that must have come from that other flower which we will call Virgil. Then in Canto thirty-third we find these words:

"There very weeping suffers not to weep,
For at their eyes, grief, seeking passage, finds
Impeachment, and rolling inward turns
For increase of sharp anguish; the first tears
Hang clustered, and like crystal vigors show,
Under the socket brimming all the cup."

It is well known that people who are ofttimes the most grieved cannot shed tears. Did not Dante know this? Birds, insects, winds, man and beasts are agents in carrying the pollen grains from one flower to another. Did not these help to fertilize the flower under consideration? But, alas, even his old age, which was spent in poverty, finds its parallel. For do not most plants, after they have produced their fruit, sink and die unnoticed?

This particular human plant died Sept. 14, 1321, but, like every flower that brings forth its seed, Dante died to live. Not only more gloriously in this present world, but I hope also in that New Jerusalem, where he will be brought to even greater perfection. The fallen petals from this flower repose in Ravenna, and they seem as precious as the rose leaves in our most costly rose jars. The seed from a certain plant lives for a short time, only as distinct types of that flower; so

Dante's direct line of descent became extinct in 1509.

We have among the flora of the world a lens plant; like it, we may liken Dante unto a mighty lens. "For whatever there was of piety, of philosophy, of poetry, of love of Nature, and of love of knowledge in those days was drawn to a focus in his writings." In the light of our comparison, then, who dare say that we are not the children of God and of Nature!

We are not only intimately but vitally bound up with nature. Her laws and the principles governing her operations rule and control us. Love Nature and you will love her Maker. Emerson in speaking of "gifts" says: "Flowers are always fit presents because they remind us that a ray of beauty outvalues all the utilities of the world."

Have we not all seen this exemplified in the case of the sick! Have not flowers—a bouquet of roses or carnations perchance—spoken directly to you of a Father's love? These pure and untainted daughters of Nature are worthy of preaching because so pure, and they become doubly significant when accompanied by a sainted person or a prayer. Alas, how often do we tarry and only send our messengers to speak to a cold, lifeless body! Would it not be better to lay the roses and lilies in compliment upon the caskets in which our friends now live, rather than upon the coffins in which their bodies shall lie when the crape hangs upon the door! It has pleased some one to translate for us the language of flowers and their bodies.

How surely he knew that vital subject who

called the ivy friendship. Surely it takes an Emerson or a Black thus to speak.

Almost all of our flowers have thus been translated into our Anglo-Saxon tongue.

I sometimes wonder if flowers do not converse one with another. They inter-marry, why not speak? "A Snap-Shot of Spring," written by the author, can best speak at this point.

Springtime is springtime because all animated matter seems to spring. After the glossy patent leather shoes of the streams and lakes have cracked and no longer add beauty to the snug and artistic costume of Mr. Winter, when the myriad crystals of dazzling brilliants composing his costume have been picked by the nimble fingers of the sunbeams, and his icicle-filled canes have met the lips of the joyous school boys, he takes his hat of St. Patrick's green and waves adieu, leaving only the aroma of his pines for the breezes to waft on as a menu to the world of sense. The menu is understood; and almost simultaneously the eye sees the advanced guards, with their lanterns of gold. Thus the dandelion has fulfilled its mission, until it forms a white silk parasol for the vigilant ant. Every atom which contains life is at work. Even the vibrating air brings to us the melody from the red bird perched in yonder tree. How patiently he sits, trying to coax the blossoms from their downy bud chambers.

Aroused, listening, yawning, the waxy curtain is drawn aside and, with all the beauty and pomp of a bride, the apple blossoms appear, blushing and reflecting in their cheeks of angelic white-

ness the color of their serenader. Looking beneath, one sees a carpet of delicate green, covered here and there with a rug of spring beauties. Oh! where is the harpist with skill as great as the snowy pebbles which give forth the music on this joyous occasion? Closer observation reveals the fact that all Nature, from

The grasshopper to the hopping toad
That sits in yonder dusty road,
Down to the insects of a thousand colors—
Painted by some unknown artist or other

gives step.

At our feet we notice the tiny seedling, with its leaf-like hands extended, as if in prayer, thanking God for the message embodied in every raindrop. What Muse has sung to us of the beauty and meaning encased and liquidized in every raindrop? Is it that God liquidizes his messages for the seeds asleep in the ground? Add to all this the linguistic school of the flowers conversing with each other in the voice of perfume, teaching each other their individual tongues by means of the butterfly and lightning-winged humming bird which dips into every nectary of nectarian knowledge, and you will have springtime fairly begun.

Flowers not only remind us that spring has come, but they speak to us of the arrival of many seasons. Divine service has always a greater influence when we are listening to song and prayer, while our eyes are feasting upon a splendidly decorated cathedral. The revealed word is but one

volume of God's revelation to us. Nature is His picture book. We are children in the love of Christ; and since the child, in intellect, can be taught by means of objects, so we in the realm of the Spirit of Power can best be educated by having combined pressure of both volumes at the same time. Again, what would weddings be without flowers? Are they not the truest brides on earth? A woman without flowers, at this reception or that ball, is considered less refined than she who appears with them. You may call it custom. Well—more than that—it is a noble custom. It gives me great pleasure to see the maid as well as the older lady of fashion wear flowers in their bonnets. Indeed these precious souls seem to have felt that the dainty fingers of fair women would pluck them, and so they grew that they might wilt, and, therefore be useless for such decorations. I would that the birds, the jewels of the air, had been as thoughtful.

A bouquet of dainty flowers and vines will make any dinner more palatable. Have you watched your feelings when some one pulls a weed from among your flowers, as the same person destroys the plant or simply the flower growing next? What causes the difference in feeling? Do we let this same attitude creep over us when the mortals round us are snatched away by some unseen hand? Because we cannot see beauty is it a sign that it is absent? Perhaps it is our prerogative, since it was given us to have command over all things beneath us.

With what concern we labor among our plants,

endeavoring to bring them to physical beauty, while perhaps our neighbor, as to mortals, or even a brother or sister, is dying from the effects of sin. When will man learn to know God aright? He gave us both, but one is not to have the ascendency over the other; and especially not the lesser of the two kingdoms. It means much to lose a valuable plant; but it means the loss of heaven to lose one's soul. What color is the lily to which Christ referred? Many people will say, "white," but consult H. B. Green and he will say "red." This is but another illustration of the way in which we are wont to form judgments—circumstantial evidence seems to rule the court's decision. Not only flowers, but men and women, have suffered from lack of knowledge in passing judgment. This gives us some idea of the scope of our thoughts and of the degree of firmness with which they hold and rule us. It is difficult for us to judge correctly. Some will prefer one plant, and some another, because the first bears a single large flower, while the second gives birth to dozens of dainty drops of dew. In the same way and for similar reasons, we are anxious to shower praises upon some one because he gives thousands of dollars for the building of a home for the aged or poor, while the one who, with less, but a heart full of Christian love, gives, as it were, her mite, which falls as the dew upon the parched lips of some fevered patient, passes unnoticed. Oh, that we had the lens-like mind of God!

Again, notice how a vine will reach forth its tendrils in search of something to which it can

cling; and observe its choice as to what that support shall be.

The sensitive plant seems to have nerves, and, indeed, we dare not deny it. The pitcher plant, so choice in the selection of its food, is like unto the Venus fly trap—both are carnivorous. All this simply teaches us that the depths and meaning of nature have not yet reached solution. The best of mathematicians can give us nothing more exact in construction of squares, triangles and hexagons, etc.—than can Nature. Ask yourself, To what is the color due? and then read concerning the various theories. Note how the blood, or perhaps you say sap, since the corpuscles are all white, courses through root, stem, and leaves. Watch with what care the tree, by the inherent law of its nature, seeks to heal over a wound inflicted on its body. Do not all these considerations bring a multitude of questions to the very tip of your tongue? Search for the perfume gland. It is not always on the petal, but sometimes in the corolla-like throat or even on the stem supporting it, as if to conceal from the impudent botanist the secret spring. He who does not see God in Nature is either insane or heartless.

An artist may dip her brush and paint, but the lifelike touch is missing. The dew fails to accumulate on the petals of her creation. The seed never ripens, and the perfume is never scattered by the invisible atomizer.

Nevertheless, let the artist labor on. It broadens her soul just to know that she cannot. Let the sculptor continue to mold or rather to unfold,

for it will likewise reveal to him the need of a Master teacher. The rainbow is the palette from which Nature obtains her colors. If this be true how much more true is it that Christ is the palette from which you and I are to secure those colors; and to be taught the use of the same, to paint our truest and best likeness in Him.

CHAPTER III.

LIGHT.

LIGHT has had its embryo state as well as man. The primitive stage of light, however, was because of the condition of men. Is it possible that the full splendor of artificial light was taken from man's store of knowledge at the sinning of our parents, when concern for the future crept again into the hearts of the children of men? Is it possible that a means of lighting that future spontaneously crept into existence?

Perhaps the flint, tallow-dip, oil lamp, gas and electric light stages of light only represent to us our loss of time and opportunity. We might have had the last at first had not our first parents snuffed the flame given them by divine right.

As it is we can glance back and note the degree of light as it existed in men during the ages. Then, too, we can easily detect the parallel advance made by man as he was accompanied and tutored by light. Thus light has come to be a Means. How strange is the contrast between light and darkness! We are supposed to have lived in the light during the past, but as we now recall the past it was darkness.

The glory of the present hour will be the

shadow of the future light, just as the light of yesterday has become the shadow of the brilliancy of to-day. With light comes life and opportunity. How could our ancestors have lived as we do, we having a brighter light? It is not strange, when we are reminded of the part played by light, that the people of old were wont to worship the sun. Surely they felt within themselves a desire for light and their greatest source was that of Helios. To us the sun is simply the orb of light, around which our earth not only revolves, but upon which its very existence depends. If, then, the men of primitive intellect worshipped the only source of terrestrial life, surely since they have bequeathed to us so great a blessing, we should remember the Golden Rule, and will to our posterity a well-defined knowledge of the true source of spiritual light and life. How silently and yet how completely do the little messengers of light drive the fairies of darkness into places of safety and retreat! We do not hear the tread of feet or the shouts of command, but only the lookers-on remind us that the conflict is at hand. Presently we find the dark-robed fairies of the night crouched under bushes, behind pictures, in cellars and caves. There they are pleased to wait until the captain of the Sun's hosts reclines for a nap. The Captain of our Salvation never reclines, but, nevertheless, the fairies of darkness in our hearts come forth and sometimes endeavor to conquer the greater power. The latter conflict is not without strife. The war between the forces with which men are so closely connected is much more vital

and significant than the mere force of plant life. We have all seen the vegetable as it commenced to grow in the dark. The bulb or tuber has within itself all the elements of growth; the moisture, heat and light are but aids. Yet how true are those aids. Man at one time had lurking within himself all the conditions of spiritual growth, but they were lost and had to be regained. The plant that grows in the dark is etiolated, yet it grows. Place this plant in the sunlight and watch the transformation. See how the chlorophyl granules are manufactured and distributed throughout the plant. The stomata and water pores now function perfectly and we are pleased to style the vegetating plant healthy. Thus it was the light that caused health. Every plant contains within itself light, but the light is its life and can only be used to collect more light, consequently more life. A plant, as well as our bodies, is condensed light. Our bodies are simply plants cultivated for their fruit, the spirit. The flower is the soul of the plant. Let us see. The plant grows by an inherent law, but that law demands light, among other things. If the plant die touch it with light, and it becomes light, save the small amount of glue and nails with which the light was held. We feed upon the vegetable, animal and mineral kingdoms, all of which are the products of light. Thus we can be reduced to a condensed mass of light.

Light can be held; all that we lack is that substance which can withstand the heat.

Heat is not only characteristic of the light of

the sun, but we can easily detect the glow in the man lighted by the Christ Man. Take one who is cold and indifferent toward Christianity, who displays no activity in the realm of saints. Touch such an one with a coal from the altar of heaven, and you will find that in him are the oil and the wick of the flame of love.

To show the warmth of the flame, let us take a glance at the life of George Müller, of Bristol. Perhaps we would better look at the George Müller of Heimersleben, if we would see him before the wick was light. How cold, and indifferent—yea, even wicked and despisable he was, but after the Wagner prayer meeting he was changed to a man in whom the flame began to make heat. Heat causes expansion—because, as we have said, it is condensed light. So when the heat from the Christian flame began to play in him, he, too, began to expand, because he could not prevent it. There is no substance which can withstand or contain the heat from Christ. Here is the difference. George Müller began at once to expand, and with that expansion came light, so that to-day, though the original flame has died, there remain a multitude of flames bearing light and heat in every part of the world. The two thousand for whom he cared are the living lights of to-day. They are the Means. Then, too, his life story, written by Dr. Pierson, is another light placed upon a hill. I would rather, yea, a thousand times rather, have my own immortal flame extinguished by the very darkness of hell than to have it known at the mercy seat of God that the

waves of sin generated by me caused another flame to flicker. Darkness, which is negative, is comparable to sadness. Although darkness brought our woe into existence, we can use it just as the Master uses sadness, to ripen those fruits which are not mellowed by the sun and its companion cheerfulness.

We rest during the dark hours of the night; we build up, or rather we are built up by the very forces which darkness calls into action—once to deteriorate, again to elevate. This is proof positive that sin is sin's vital enemy. God separated the light from the dark. He made each for a special purpose, and they must so be used by us. Darkness contains some light. Since the sun first lighted the earth there has never been total darkness. Light is light, but there are degrees of intensity. The intense light of the sun is for a purpose, and likewise the filtered light of the forest. Oaks cannot grow to perfection in caves, neither can ferns and mosses reach their ideal in the burning heat of unmolested sun rays. It is a peculiar fact, but nevertheless true, that the light of Christ is often too powerful for the young and tender shoot. A young man can be raised in a Christian home and yet not be a Christian, but let such an one come under an influence less intense, and he will in most instances begin to grow, until finally he is able to bask in the full splendor of a healthy Christian influence. Such an one is but a fern that must be permitted to sleep in the sifted light, as it gently falls through the leaves of trees. He must recline on moss-covered couches

until he gains strength enough to enter the fiery furnace and be untouched. All birds were not made to soar in the direct path of the heavenly diamond. Their eyes cannot stand the glitter.

The eagle seems to defy the bold, audacious look of old Helios, while the delicate humming bird darts here and there as if to flee from his penetrating gaze. It is not always he who seems even to revel in the splendor and sublimity of Christian loveliness that is clothed with the brightest plumage of Christ-like perfection, and beauty; for very often do we find the dazzling colors of fine art, and the tints and hues of the dawn in the garment of some poor unknown Christian mother alone with her God and His Word. God made each one of us with an organ of sight, adapted to the various degrees of light and to the power of discrimination. We look at yonder flower garden and feast our poor souls by means of the avenue of sight. The eye is the most delicate, most sensitive, part of the human structure. Why did God in His all-perfect vision see fit to so equip us? Surely there was a purpose.

Not only are human eyes sensitive to the various colors, but even those of the birds and insects; but if we, like the fish in caves, do not use our eyes, they will in time become negative. How awful it seems to us, as we look at another whose eyes are closed to the beauties of this world! Think of those great historic souls—eyeless—yet they lived, not only unto their own day and generation, but also for the generations to come. If, then, Sadness touches our hearts with her trem-

Flowers.

We have now arrived at the period of transplanting. Every successful plant grower always transplants his seedlings several times. The very young slip or seedling grows in sand. Dante thus first grew in studies of early youth, but now he is given the more sturdy soil. He is beginning to be buffeted. Take two young plants equally strong and equally well developed, and place them under different conditions, under different circumstances, different environments, and note the results. One grows stronger, the other weaker.

Dante, like Milton, was trained by the strictest academical education, yet Dante lived under a warmer sun and brighter sky than Milton; and found in the rich variety and gayety of his early life a defence against the withering misfortune of his later years. We cannot predict just what will take place in regard to a plant. The sturdiness thereof is not determined by its height under a clear sky, but only when the howling tempests of politics, if you please, assail it. Our plant, after his transplanting, grows rapidly. Every plant has assimilative organs. So in this one, Dante, we find not only assimilative processes at work, but a concentration of the spirit of the Middle Ages. He is, in his very concentrating, preparing to expand and send forth into the world that for which almost every plant is raised; namely, its flowers, then its fruit.

The true and lasting fruit of mankind is the fruit of the head. A plant not only impoverishes the soil upon which it grows, but it will, if left, again fertilize it. So Dante fertilized the Italian

linguistic soil. He made it richer and better, and therefore more able to bring forth well developed plants.

As we look at certain flowers and drink in their meaning, we are charmed. Our æsthetic natures are elevated, our standard of joy is raised. A home may be unknown, but when it contains some marvel, either in the plant or man family, it becomes immortalized. "Dante, like Virgil, could immortalize, by a simple expression, a person, a place, or a phase of Nature." This power, a gift from God, cannot be acquired.

There is, however, a more striking similarity—to paint word pictures between Dante and Milton. The flower upon this plant is now being revealed. The bud was beautiful; no doubt the expanding flower will be superb. Behold, it opens, it dazzles the eye, and, I dare add, it continues for many, many years to blind the people so that they do not see its beauty until it begins to wane. They only realized its extreme significance when they beheld the fruit. Dante's "Inferno" could not have been the fruit of a plant whose roots were fibrous. It took a plant with mighty fabric to breathe into existence such fruit. Recall to your mind its vivid color-descriptions and its symmetry. Think of the strain upon the fiber of the plant. Imagine the fertilizing power. Conceive of his imaginative power. Yet, Dante's was not without foundation, and it is an easy matter to see where he obtained much of his material. It is a biological fact that more plants or rather more flowers are fertilized by cross than by self fertilization.

So we can pick out certain colors, verses that must have come from that other flower which we will call Virgil. Then in Canto thirty-third we find these words:

"There very weeping suffers not to weep,
For at their eyes, grief, seeking passage, finds
Impeachment, and rolling inward turns
For increase of sharp anguish; the first tears
Hang clustered, and like crystal vigors show,
Under the socket brimming all the cup."

It is well known that people who are ofttimes the most grieved cannot shed tears. Did not Dante know this? Birds, insects, winds, man and beasts are agents in carrying the pollen grains from one flower to another. Did not these help to fertilize the flower under consideration? But, alas, even his old age, which was spent in poverty, finds its parallel. For do not most plants, after they have produced their fruit, sink and die unnoticed?

This particular human plant died Sept. 14, 1321, but, like every flower that brings forth its seed, Dante died to live. Not only more gloriously in this present world, but I hope also in that New Jerusalem, where he will be brought to even greater perfection. The fallen petals from this flower repose in Ravenna, and they seem as precious as the rose leaves in our most costly rose jars. The seed from a certain plant lives for a short time, only as distinct types of that flower; so

Dante's direct line of descent became extinct in 1509.

We have among the flora of the world a lens plant; like it, we may liken Dante unto a mighty lens. "For whatever there was of piety, of philosophy, of poetry, of love of Nature, and of love of knowledge in those days was drawn to a focus in his writings." In the light of our comparison, then, who dare say that we are not the children of God and of Nature!

We are not only intimately but vitally bound up with nature. Her laws and the principles governing her operations rule and control us. Love Nature and you will love her Maker. Emerson in speaking of "gifts" says: "Flowers are always fit presents because they remind us that a ray of beauty outvalues all the utilities of the world."

Have we not all seen this exemplified in the case of the sick! Have not flowers—a bouquet of roses or carnations perchance—spoken directly to you of a Father's love? These pure and untainted daughters of Nature are worthy of preaching because so pure, and they become doubly significant when accompanied by a sainted person or a prayer. Alas, how often do we tarry and only send our messengers to speak to a cold, lifeless body! Would it not be better to lay the roses and lilies in compliment upon the caskets in which our friends now live, rather than upon the coffins in which their bodies shall lie when the crape hangs upon the door! It has pleased some one to translate for us the language of flowers and their bodies.

How surely he knew that vital subject who

called the ivy friendship. Surely it takes an Emerson or a Black thus to speak.

Almost all of our flowers have thus been translated into our Anglo-Saxon tongue.

I sometimes wonder if flowers do not converse one with another. They inter-marry, why not speak? "A Snap-Shot of Spring," written by the author, can best speak at this point.

Springtime is springtime because all animated matter seems to spring. After the glossy patent leather shoes of the streams and lakes have cracked and no longer add beauty to the snug and artistic costume of Mr. Winter, when the myriad crystals of dazzling brilliants composing his costume have been picked by the nimble fingers of the sunbeams, and his icicle-filled canes have met the lips of the joyous school boys, he takes his hat of St. Patrick's green and waves adieu, leaving only the aroma of his pines for the breezes to waft on as a menu to the world of sense. The menu is understood; and almost simultaneously the eye sees the advanced guards, with their lanterns of gold. Thus the dandelion has fulfilled its mission, until it forms a white silk parasol for the vigilant ant. Every atom which contains life is at work. Even the vibrating air brings to us the melody from the red bird perched in yonder tree. How patiently he sits, trying to coax the blossoms from their downy bud chambers.

Aroused, listening, yawning, the waxy curtain is drawn aside and, with all the beauty and pomp of a bride, the apple blossoms appear, blushing and reflecting in their cheeks of angelic white-

ness the color of their serenader. Looking beneath, one sees a carpet of delicate green, covered here and there with a rug of spring beauties. Oh! where is the harpist with skill as great as the snowy pebbles which give forth the music on this joyous occasion? Closer observation reveals the fact that all Nature, from

The grasshopper to the hopping toad
That sits in yonder dusty road,
Down to the insects of a thousand colors—
Painted by some unknown artist or other

gives step.

At our feet we notice the tiny seedling, with its leaf-like hands extended, as if in prayer, thanking God for the message embodied in every raindrop. What Muse has sung to us of the beauty and meaning encased and liquidized in every raindrop? Is it that God liquidizes his messages for the seeds asleep in the ground? Add to all this the linguistic school of the flowers conversing with each other in the voice of perfume, teaching each other their individual tongues by means of the butterfly and lightning-winged humming bird which dips into every nectary of nectarian knowledge, and you will have springtime fairly begun.

Flowers not only remind us that spring has come, but they speak to us of the arrival of many seasons. Divine service has always a greater influence when we are listening to song and prayer, while our eyes are feasting upon a splendidly decorated cathedral. The revealed word is but one

volume of God's revelation to us. Nature is His picture book. We are children in the love of Christ; and since the child, in intellect, can be taught by means of objects, so we in the realm of the Spirit of Power can best be educated by having combined pressure of both volumes at the same time. Again, what would weddings be without flowers? Are they not the truest brides on earth? A woman without flowers, at this reception or that ball, is considered less refined than she who appears with them. You may call it custom. Well—more than that—it is a noble custom. It gives me great pleasure to see the maid as well as the older lady of fashion wear flowers in their bonnets. Indeed these precious souls seem to have felt that the dainty fingers of fair women would pluck them, and so they grew that they might wilt, and, therefore be useless for such decorations. I would that the birds, the jewels of the air, had been as thoughtful.

A bouquet of dainty flowers and vines will make any dinner more palatable. Have you watched your feelings when some one pulls a weed from among your flowers, as the same person destroys the plant or simply the flower growing next? What causes the difference in feeling? Do we let this same attitude creep over us when the mortals round us are snatched away by some unseen hand? Because we cannot see beauty is it a sign that it is absent? Perhaps it is our prerogative, since it was given us to have command over all things beneath us.

With what concern we labor among our plants,

endeavoring to bring them to physical beauty, while perhaps our neighbor, as to mortals, or even a brother or sister, is dying from the effects of sin. When will man learn to know God aright? He gave us both, but one is not to have the ascendency over the other; and especially not the lesser of the two kingdoms. It means much to lose a valuable plant; but it means the loss of heaven to lose one's soul. What color is the lily to which Christ referred? Many people will say, "white," but consult H. B. Green and he will say "red." This is but another illustration of the way in which we are wont to form judgments—circumstantial evidence seems to rule the court's decision. Not only flowers, but men and women, have suffered from lack of knowledge in passing judgment. This gives us some idea of the scope of our thoughts and of the degree of firmness with which they hold and rule us. It is difficult for us to judge correctly. Some will prefer one plant, and some another, because the first bears a single large flower, while the second gives birth to dozens of dainty drops of dew. In the same way and for similar reasons, we are anxious to shower praises upon some one because he gives thousands of dollars for the building of a home for the aged or poor, while the one who, with less, but a heart full of Christian love, gives, as it were, her mite, which falls as the dew upon the parched lips of some fevered patient, passes unnoticed. Oh, that we had the lens-like mind of God!

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cling; and observe its choice as to what that support shall be.

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CHAPTER III.

LIGHT.

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As it is we can glance back and note the degree of light as it existed in men during the ages. Then, too, we can easily detect the parallel advance made by man as he was accompanied and tutored by light. Thus light has come to be a Means. How strange is the contrast between light and darkness! We are supposed to have lived in the light during the past, but as we now recall the past it was darkness.

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must take things in their natural order. It is said that each life represents at different stages in its development every form of evolutionary life. This is true not only in the physiological sense, but in the religious realm. We need but recall Paul, when we are soon reminded of Saul, but is this state of affairs to continue forever? I dare conjecture that in a thousand years from to-day, there will remain no traces of gill slits in the developing human embryo.

Certain laws exist to-day because the conditions demand them, but remove the conditions and the laws will be dried up in the splendor of new ideas.

We need not look for a Saul in every young man before we find a Paul. If the young people of to-day having reached their twentieth dawn of spring do not think and act as the youth of twenty-five or thirty, years ago, I say unto you that something is wrong. We dare not blame God. We must look at ourselves. Do we use all the Means at our command for the upbuilding of noble Christian characters? The farmers of to-day do not buy wild oats and cultivate them for seed, but, on the contrary, they see to it that the seed is of the finest quality. It is a favorite theory of mine that no young man should associate with one of his own age. This may sound strange and perhaps frighten some, but when you learn its meaning the discord will be harmony.

We should not permit the child to associate with himself because he is his equal in age. The best companion for any young man is Christ. But

some will say he needs an earthly companion. This is partly true, but when you select that companion be sure that he is older, not only in years but in truth. It cannot be denied, for who can gainsay it, that God selects youths and even causes children to be born whom he wishes to use for special purposes. We dare not judge their development and compare it with others. Take the young man, for instance, who has been chosen by God for a special work. The ordinary temptations will never tempt him. He can and will resist the evil enticements that cause his brother to fall. This, some one may say, is not right. When, I ask, have you assumed God's prerogative? Such a one will have a mist over his life. He will do good and work along the lines of righteousness before he is really conscious of the fact. At times the veil will be raised, and the child will look about for a time to get his bearings. After these few seconds or perhaps days, as God may deem best, the shadow is again thrown upon the chosen one and he is again at work.

This special training may last through life and the garment always be worn, but history reveals some cases where the latter years have been those of the unveiling of the monument of God's love, and then, and then only, does such an one realize for the first time, what has been accomplished by means of him in the eyes of a mortal. Parents must select the means unless the child is under the direct influence of God, for in that case it would be the grossest of sins. Earnestness need

not be the index to silvery cords, in this dispensation of the Spirit and of means, but, alas, it may be the waxen plate in the youth susceptible to the impressions of the Spirit. Age counts for much and is a wonderful means, but we must not limit power to age. Have we not had in history instances of the greatest heroism in the young. France has furnished—but I refrain from naming her. Look also to Italy and our own fair America. It is not in age or culture or wealth or power or might that great feats are accomplished, but in laying hold of the Means given to us and using them.

We ascertain the age of the oak by counting the number of annual rings. I wonder how old we would be if our age was to be based upon the number of annual rings of growth in any one of our threefold natures. The oak must either grow or die.

The means for growth are given and if, by any other means, they are cut off, decay is the result. Likewise with the mortal. It is true that age, of its own sweet will, adds knowledge to the individual by sheer means of age, and yet I think this is but the result of contact. We can note the lack of development even with advancing age, when those avenues are closed by means of which the mind is to be tutored. The means for accomplishing great and wonderful feats are not always suspected, neither are the means always respected. Thoreau, in his "Walden," writes thus: "The myriads who built the pyramids to be the tombs of the Pharoahs were fed on garlic, and

it may be were not decently buried themselves. The mason who finishes the cornice of the palace returns at night perchance to a hut not so good as a wigwam."

This reminds us that means are of various grades and degrees of importance. The builders of the tombs were more important than the material out of which the pyramids were built; but it seems to me the designer back of it all was the greatest means. We read in the literature of the world, "Lives of great men all remind us we can make our lives sublime." I wonder of what the lives of the less noble and courageous remind us? Do not the lives of the noble youth remind us of things just as sublime as the feats of older persons in times past? There remain some questions unanswered. Notwithstanding that Nature is old, she does not appear so. Even in these advanced years of her life she delights to dress in gay colors. Tints the most delicate and refined are hers. She still bears that supreme dignity so characteristic of her mountains; while modulations of her voice vary from the softest whisper of the child to the commanding tones of the captain. She still has her sorrows and her days of joy, but yet she is full of glee. Nature does not grow old nor weary. Then why should we, if we are her children? She, our mother, surely will give unto us those principles by means of which we can retain our youthful vigor even to the grave. We must not divorce ourselves from her, but by clinging to her breast we shall become the children of natural and unpainted beauty.

Age.

If Nature were to be placed before the throne of grace and judged, surely she could not be condemned for riotous living. Neither would she be asked to give an account of each year's work. We shall not be judged by our age, but by our faith. Age counts for much, but chiefly as a means of showing an appreciation and a manifestation of our faith. We need not look to the evening of old age for the delightful sunsets, for we have just as noble sunsets earlier in life, though they may not be behind mountains white with the snowy locks of time. Not long since a newborn butterfly rested at my feet and this message flowed from my pen:

It was a bright June morning,
Cottonwood bloom filled the air,
As sentinels placed here and there.

At my feet rested a butterfly,
Whose wings momentarily did expand,
Revealing colors splendid, beauteous, grand.

An infant in the use of wings was it.
Being lately born into the world of flight,
With a clear vision and delicately light.

An unsuspecting but vigilant and—
Crawled upon the wings so gay,
In search of food or in search of play.

Means.

Our butterfly was seized with inspiration.
High in the air it swiftly flew,
Until the tiny ant with cold was blue.

Closely crouched in the down-like feathers.
The two journeyed on and on—
E'en through the mist of another dawn.

Whether the aeronaut fell from his ship,
Or waited until it rested there—
On some thistledown so fair, I cannot say.

But all this is rightly likened
Unto men—who all unsought
Are carried away on the wings of new-born thought.

Men as ants thus high do sail
In new and unexplored realms of life,
Proving theories fancies by mental strife.

Until at last they, too, must rest,
Look and examine their former selves,
As seen on thought-bound shelves.

CHAPTER VI.

MUSIC.

MAN from remote antiquity has had enough genius to constitute some device by means of which he could sing out the harmony of his nature. It is one of the most interesting studies to investigate the development of both vocal and instrumental music. "The Hebrews were an eminently musical people. These people claim no originality, but attribute the origin of musical instruments to the antediluvian days of Jubal, who was the father of all such as handle the harp and the organ."

As we walk back through the centuries, we find traces of music, yet crude as compared with that of to-day. The music of Old Testament times is far inferior to that of our time, and yet the literature of the Old Testament is such as to excite our wonder and admiration. Thus we are forced to recognize a strange contrast.

The music of antiquity was as unpolished as its people. Their music, evidently, was not the source of such pronounced inspiration as the sayings of the Old Testament. We must look for another cause for the development and perfection of music.

Means.

All may not accept the fundamental principle by means of which we shall endeavor to show the development of music.

We must admit that there has been advance. That it has been evolved from a crude and uncultured state to one of perfection. The Chinese make use of music in their most dignified ceremonies, without genius enough to advance it, even if their sumptuary laws would permit. "The Hindu writers have names corresponding to ours for the tonic or first, the mediant or third, and the dominant or fifth of the scale; and indeed there are multitudinous proofs of their assiduous study of the art, however limited their practical skill, owing to the paucity and imperfection of their musical instruments." In all countries we might show the crude beginnings, but this is not necessary. The Romans copied their art from the Greek. The ancient Hebrew music, some say, was Egyptian in less polished form. Look where we will, we find music, but in all our searching we fail to find a Haydn, Beethoven, Schumann, Wagner, or Mozart, in the stream of composers. Neither do we find a Patti, Lind, Grisi, Alboni, Braham, Antognini, Mario or Ronconi in the sphere of song.

This marvelous advance must have a cause, and that cause lies in the theory of evolution.

Men have emerged from brute life and life of war into spiritual life and that of peace and arbitration. So, too, we have, as a people, come to realize the worth and meaning in music. The masterpieces of music in both lines existed before

we knew it and before we appreciated them.

Men have not dreamed out the value of music and then set about to write it. Ah! no. It has come as the morning breeze, and we have been refreshed. This, again, is a proof of its evolution. Even the great compositions of to-day are tinted with this principle. One composer is inspired with song as he listens to the winds. His soul has through the ages been made sensitive and now the conditions are fruitful.

Masterful compositions are evolved in one nature as we are evolved through nature. The musical ability of one man may have had its evolutionary seed sown a thousand generations toward the East. We may wonder whence came the first seed. Our only rational response is, God had an ideal. This ideal he set developing through the countless ages of physical and animal evolution, until it met the impulse of the breath of God and partook of a deeper melody at the inbreathing of the Immortal Soul. Wild nature of to-day has not lost her musical charm. The streams play just as sweetly to-day as of old, or even more so, in comparison to the busy world. The birds have not been caught by man and taught to sing; on the contrary, these jewels of the air are man's instructors at this very hour. Examine, if you will, the human throat; compare it with the forms of animal creation before us, and you will not find a very striking contrast. Here is where activity not only determines structure, but beauty and meaning of structure. Then, if we can find real traces of prototypes of music in the realms

below us, and if we can trace its development through the countless ages, and even note its advance during our own lifetime, then, surely, we will attribute rationality to ourselves by saying, Evolution accounts for it all.

The best proof we have for ascribing intelligence in this world of ours is that we find purpose in all the operations of nature. Purpose, end, and rationality are synonymous. We must now seek to find the purpose in music. Surely our Father would not cause the physical apparatus to be developed if it were not for some purpose. Every part of our physical body has its special function, and surely that part so near the heart and soul will not fail in its duty.

We are told that in the private as well as in the religious life of the Hebrews music held a prominent place. Likewise we find that it played a very mysterious part in driving out the evil spirit from Saul. Again it was intimately, and, we dare add, vitally, connected with prophecy, but in times past, just as in the days at our threshold, we find that the cords as well as the hands and feet were put to improper uses.

Nero fiddled when Rome was in flames. Isaiah pronounces a woe against those who sat till the morning twilight over their wine, to the sound of "the harp and viol, the tabret and pipe."

Music has always occupied a prominent place in religious worship. We are delighted, in the present day, to listen to the harmony of several hundred musical instruments played by masters. What must have been the inspiration which came

to the people of old, when, with their corresponding culture, they listened to the four thousand, out of the thirty thousand composing the tribe in the reign of David, who are said to have been appointed to praise Jehovah with the instruments which David made.

You say our present orchestras charm you, lift you out of earth and place you gently in sweetest bliss. What must have been the intoxicating rapture, combined with ecstatic joy, of those who listened to two hundred thousand trumpets blended in harmony with forty thousand harps, tinted here and there with the light and the dark shades of thousands of human voices! Surely we are not basking in the fullest splendor of spiritual sunshine and heavenly worship.

Music hath not only charms to soothe the savage breast, but she hath forgiveness for the sinner.

We can find still another cause for the evolution of music. It is in this: The strings of man's throat needed tightening, the keyboard of his violin-like breast needed to be seasoned, not only by time and contact with man and angels, but by inspiration from God, while the eye must reveal the soul to the world, which is woven with finer fibers than ever before. So, when all things were conducive, music, the art of trembling vibrations, sprang spontaneously upon the uncultured heart of society and trained it by subduing and overawing it. Where would be the world, in its onward march to-day if we could abstract the part played by music?

Surely we must tread with lighter steps than

ever before, not only in the dance, but in religious worship. Listen to the music falling from the keys of a chapel organ, played by a spiritually minded master; gossamer-like light steals through the deeply stained windows; perfume of the lily fills the air; the congregation sits in ecstacy. The cathedral is buried in the shade of oaks, but still they have a clearer vision of heaven than if they were in the presence of the full orbed splendor of the sun.

Music, thou art a divine given key
Lent to unlock for you and for me
The door which permits us to enter the street,
Where God and Christ and man do meet.

The most awe-inspiring assemblage of people of which the writer was ever permitted to form a part was that of the funeral of a physician. It was held in one of the most splendid university chapels of America.

The vast auditorium, seating three thousand people, was filled with thinking and feeling mortals. Presently Chopin's "Funeral March" lived again. With the smallest vibration of the air, scarcely heard, the organ responded to the master touch. The massive doors swung back: two soldiers in uniform led, in perfect step, the funeral procession. As the organ notes found their way through the forest of palms they met and kissed the notes of him who said, in accents clear and startling: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on me, though he be dead, yet

shall he live again." The coffin was placed before the altar, the services proceeded. In what did the grandeur culminate? Music unlocked the hearts and threw the key away. Music hath special times and places of enchantment. Who has not had every fiber of his being melted and rewoven into a texture resembling silk, by the strains which fell from a guitar, while softly and tenderly gliding over rippling, moonlit waters? Then, too, the serenade hath special soothing power; and why? Moisture, which takes possession of the air in the absence of the sprightly nymphs of the sun, is favorable and becomes a good conductor; while darkness closes the avenue of sight and gives the ear full control. Here, as in prayer, the closing of the eye enables the eye of the soul to see God. If you would not lose the charm of the serenade, then do not frighten the messengers away by means of light. Silence, supreme midnight stillness, is the serenader's.

It is a fact of some importance and significance that many of our best musicians come from homes of poverty. This illustrates that passage in Colossians which reads: "And there is no respect of persons." Thousands of voices, which might have been the means of melting this world of ours into Christian loveliness, have died unknown and unheard. Will the Master say: "You have not played your part?"

Oh! that men would pour out their wealth as readily and as earnestly for the building of schools in which the musically gifted could secure proper culture. Would not this kind of giving be an

antiseptic to the almshouses and penitentiaries? Why wait until the soul is lost? Use the means which God has provided. Reach the souls of men by means of the music which lies sleeping in uncovered breasts. Then, too, this latent musical talent evens up the wealth of the world, for, by strenuous endeavor, it can be turned into wealth. He who feels the god of music knocking at the door of his soul and does not permit it to enter is just as great a culprit as one who openly commits crime. The minister of the gospel has no better calling than the teacher of voice or brush who aids to move the world to God. We may say that the hero of the twentieth century is he who shall provide a perfect and complete musical education for those who otherwise could not secure it. Why not send a soloist of great repute to China and to India? Let them preach. Could not the gospel be just as affective there by means of the voice as in America?

Martial music has done as much to bring victory to retreating hosts as the commanding presence of a noble general. And why?

The general's presence, personality, and influence, may reach the head and persuade, or may even reach the heart, but that is all; while music, that art of arts, dips its finger even into the realm of ideal feeling, and carries the wounded soldier back to home, country, and all. It strengthens him until danger becomes a negative factor, and with a firmer, more rhythmical step, he is inspired to cross the impassable. It is reported that a certain army, basking in the splendor of Alpine

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heights, was on the verge, not of a precipice, but of retreating, when the command came for the bands to lead the host, and ere they were aware, they had crossed what they supposed to be an impassable pass and had crowned the engagement with victory.

Thus music can give praise where shame might have been. Music not only thus strengthens and energizes, but, under strange, impassioned conditions, it acts as a safety valve. Angel hosts express their heavenly joy by means of song. Mortal man, under the intoxicating influence of a patriotic or religious victory, expresses himself by means of song. Tears bear a strange relationship to music. They are very often liquidized pain, but have you not seen a mother, under the weight of excessive joy, shed tears, not so much of pain as of thankfulness? Ah! these are vital. Music, tears, prayer, are three means of grace, and avenues of escape for our waiting souls.

These are the three graces for which we cannot give very cogent reasons, but which are nevertheless the foundations of our ideal life. God be praised. He is the giver and perfecter of it all, while Christ is the tuning fork.

Has the strange parallelism between great reform movements and music ever appealed to you? It may be but a coincidence, but a mighty one. Luther, that tower of faith, power and music builded on Christ, poured forth his soul in music which still fires the souls of men. Wesley, likewise, was bathed by God in the sea of music. We are all anxiously trying to prove the validity of

our arguments in the realm of morals or religion, by quoting from the works of a non-religious or non-moral source. This may add charm, and we strengthen our chapter by quoting Shakespeare on music. He says:

"The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted."

We may softly walk through the wards of a hospital filled with cots so white that one imagines a snowstorm has just passed by, while the sick and wounded are victims lying beneath the mighty flakes. We pause; the enormous mass of air, fifteen pounds to the square inch, is disturbed; it trembles; hark! a voice, almost divine, steals through space. The movement is not confined to the medium, for beneath those strange flakes of snowlike whiteness mortal men forget their pain and listen to the whispers of God. Could such a one under such a spell be taken home, ah, that home would be heaven! Consequently we must admit that music can do what the physician cannot.

It is not necessary, however, to search for man under the weight of sickness to find the power of music. We look at him engaged in any of the busy pursuits of life. If he be at work, the work ceases when the man with the hand organ and

monkey passes that way. Likewise even the small boy with his rattle-bones solicits your attention. Then let us never venture to move the volume of flexible air with harsh words or sounds, but leave it ever to the musically inclined to call us all back to God.

CHAPTER VII.

IDEALS.

IDEALS are those seen yet unseen, those known yet unknown possibilities, for the realization of which men are willing to sacrifice body, mind and spirit. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Not long since, as a supplement to one of our leading magazines, came the picture of an aged negro and wife who were counting their few pennies by means of the light that came from an old candle which was supported by a bottle. A look of surprise came over their faces as they discovered they were one penny short. It had slipped away and they knew not how. I dare conjecture that not one person in every one thousand knows where the real treasure of his heart lies. We think we do. Yet could we see as God sees, I am certain we would be surprised at our ideal, the real ideal, the truest and best treasure of our hearts. Our true ideal will be the one realized, while the one we thought to be our real treasure will be, on that counting day, when we have—not the light of a candle, but of Christ—the "penny short." When we set out in life to accomplish a certain task, the most of us are not

like the wise man who, when contemplating building a house, knew the cost, but are more like the foolish man who thought not of the price.

We, in early youth, are charmed with the work of a certain individual. We determine to make our lives the complement of his, and to add just a little to the great stream of which the principle for which he labored was but a tributary. While in childhood all things seem possible, and indeed are, for it is the youth who is near God, it is he who relies upon Him and with child-like faith builds for time and eternity. I would that the young of the future would never grow weary of this, for in it they are true and right in the eyes of God. Let us instruct our youth; let us teach them something of the difficulty of attempting anything outside of Christ. An ideal may be right in its end. If so, the life of the idealist will correspond; for in the history of every man, the meaning of his life is not consciously placed there, but in that he works out his ideal, he is working out his life. Many men have been lost, because of their ideal for life. If we could only know the ideal or the purpose which actuates men, we could easily determine the result. It is only when we see the lives of men through the microscope of a hundred years that they seem as candles, burned during the darkness of night, but which reveal in the brighter sunlight of a completed knowledge only one-half of their original splendor. How splendid it is for us of the present age to comprehend that we are the realized ideals of the hopeful, of past days! How the early Christians

must have longed for the day when they could worship without punishment! Yet they were inspired, they had ideals, as the various histories of art teach us. While they could not speak of those things near and dear to their hearts, yet they could picture them and thus look, read, and rejoice. There must have lurked in their hearts an ideal plan of worship—free, unimpeded and spiritual.

They projected into the future. They kept alive the few sparks, so that when all things were conducive they might ignite the flamable hearts of men, and then would their ideal scheme of worship be realized. We to-day are the ideals realized. May we live in respect and love for these people. Let us show to their holy spirits that we appreciate the work done for us—and by so doing we shall be better able to form ideals to be realized by the generations of the future. Then will our posterity bless us.

We do not always know the exact meaning of our ideal until we see it encased in material form. The plan of a church or bridge may lurk in the mind of an architect for months, even be there completed before he places on paper a single dot regarding it. He sees it in his mind constantly, and especially so when he has drafted his plans. Even the drafted plans are to me unintelligible. The completed structure, the ideal caught in the mass of wood, stone, iron and glass, alone reveals to me his ideal. So it is with the many of our ideals. We think that we are perfectly familiar with every detail; but alas! not so; for

when the work begins the difficulties are manifold. We need ages of preparation. Indeed we have been schooled for six thousand years, and are still only infants. Ideals have been born and have died; they have left the mind either better able to construct in the future, or weaker and less liable to build rightly. One thing is certain, we of the twentieth century should have grander and better ideals, with greater and firmer means of realizing them than were ever possessed by the people of days gone by. The world should be richer to-day than it was yesterday. The aspect of the world changes. When we open our eyes to-morrow, if we could rightly view the landscape o'er, we should feel and see eternity. The future is what we make it.

The future of every man's life is in his own hands. We are free moral agents. If, then, we should determine to present a stage filled with the horrors of carnage and the like, who could prevent? We are the architects of our own fate.

It is almost beyond estimation to reckon the value for good of a single ideal which finds lodgment in the breast of a man and is cultivated by that individual. Sculptors are idealists. Painters also. We, each of us, are artists. God is the Supreme Artist. I sometimes think (I known it is fancy), that God could, if he so chose, have one large camera, and with it take snapshots of this old world of ours every second of time. We as artists would then be revealed in our full light. What pictures some of us would present! At times beautiful, again we would ex-

hibit a negative sublimity. We should be counted impersonators, but we should be representing our best natures.

Have you ever seen an ideal person? Look at Christ. He is the mirror in which we see the defects of our own lives. When every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, will there be any one whom we can call an "ideal?" History tells of men and women who have reached the height of fame in this direction and in that.

The next generation points out to us the defects in the life past. If we could find a person with a perfect love of God actuating every motive, with physical beauty at one hundred per cent., gifted with all graces and talents, we might stop and look. But as the world is to-day we find few, if any. In that we have our ideals for bodily refinement and grace, for culture and soul cleansing, there is proof for us that there is something in the future, and that the golden age in our ideal world is still before us. We may not realize this, for we have the idea of a heaven—a place of refuge to which we can all go and have shown us just what we have accomplished for the Master.

What the future has in store for us we do not know, but we shall when we see Him, as we shall be like Him, and shall see Him as He is. There is a way of judging the ideals of men which would be of special merit to the sociologist, if he wished to spend a moment's time in gathering material. Look at the styles of pictures in the journals, Sunday papers and magazines, as well as in the photographers' show-cases. See the hidden ideals

in the subjects. This attitude or that reveals to the scrutinizing observer the actuating or dominant motive. Classes and groups can thus be gathered, and people can be divided accordingly. This mode of separation will be a new yet true one.

We are not always conscious of the ideal in another when we pass criticisms. Indeed, who are we that we should judge another? Let a person weigh the actions of his fellows, before telling the world that the weight is short.

Perhaps our own scales are not the very best. We should borrow from our neighbor. But who is my neighbor? Who of my neighbors has scales any better than my own? Would it not be wisest to measure all with the scales Christ gives us? "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you." He who permits an ideal flame to lap up the grossness of all smoldering fires is he who stands for nobleness.

We speak of an ideal day, an ideal book, and if we be asked to define "ideal" we cannot do it. Two explanations can be offered: First, it is possible that we but quote, and in so doing exhibit to the world something of our progenitors' nature. Or, again, we may be giving utterance to a something within ourselves, of which we are not fully conscious, and which is, without doubt, our truest and best nature. In this sense, are we making progress?

THE END.

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